

|  |   |                 |
|--|---|-----------------|
| <b>B. D., by her parent, Heidi Dragomir,</b> | ) |                 |
|  | ) |                 |
| <b>Plaintiff,</b>                            | ) | <b>THIRD</b>    |
|  | ) | <b>ROSEBORO</b> |
| <b>Vs.</b>                                   | ) | <b>ORDER</b>    |
|  | ) |                 |
| <b>JANA GRIGGS; MARY WATSON;</b>             | ) |                 |
| <b>ALEXA POSNY; JULIAN MANN III;</b>         | ) |                 |
| <b>GEORGE MILLER; and BUNCOMBE</b>           | ) |                 |
| <b>COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION,</b>            | ) |                 |
|  | ) |                 |
| <b>Defendants.</b>                           | ) |                 |
|  | ) |                 |

In accordance with Roseboro v. Garrison, 528 F.2d 309 (4th Cir. 1975), plaintiff, who is proceeding *pro se*, is cautioned that this defendant has filed a Motion to Dismiss contending that she lacks standing to sue, that she has failed to perfect service on this defendant and in doing so this court lacks personal jurisdiction over such defendant, and that she has failed to state a claim.

Rule 12(b)(2) provides for dismissal where the court lacks personal jurisdiction over a particular named defendant. In the Fourth Circuit, the standard for deciding a motion based on Rule 12(b)(2) was set forth in Combs v. Bakker, 886 F.2d 673, 676 (4th Cir.1989), where it explained that a plaintiff has the burden to prove personal jurisdiction by a preponderance of the evidence. When a factual dispute arises as to whether or not jurisdiction exists, the court may either conduct an evidentiary hearing or defer ruling on the matter until it receives evidence on the jurisdictional issue at trial. Id. When a court decides the issue on the record then before it, the court may consider “the motion papers, supporting legal memoranda, affidavits, other documents, and the relevant allegations of the complaint,” and the burden is plaintiff’s “to make a mere *prima facie* showing of jurisdiction to survive the jurisdictional challenge.” Clark v. Milam, 830 F.Supp. 316, 319 (S.D.W.Va.1993) (citations omitted). A court must resolve factual disputes in favor of the party asserting jurisdiction for the limited purpose of the *prima facie* showing. Bakker, at 676. Such resolution must include construing all relevant pleadings in a light most favorable to the plaintiff, assume the credibility of any affiant, and drawing the most favorable inferences for the existence of jurisdiction. Id.

Under Rule 12(b)(4) or (5), where a motion to dismiss is filed based on insufficient process or insufficient service of process, affidavits and other materials

outside the pleadings may be properly submitted and considered.

[T]he party on whose behalf service is made has the burden of establishing its validity when challenged; to do so, he must demonstrate that the procedure employed satisfied the requirements of the relevant portions of Rule 4 and any other applicable provision of law.

Light v. Wolf, 816 F.2d 746, 751 (D.C.Cir.1987) (internal quotations omitted). Where the procedural requirements of sufficient process and service of process are not satisfied, a court lacks power to assert personal jurisdiction over a defendant. Gorman v. Ameritrade Holding Corp., 293 F.3d 506, 514 (D.C.Cir.2002). Inasmuch as the sufficiency of process and service of process concern the court's jurisdiction, consideration of materials outside the pleadings, such as affidavits, is appropriate. Dimet Proprietary, Limited v. Industrial Metal Protectives, 109 F.Supp. 472 (D. Del. 1952).

Finally, Rule 12(b)(6), Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, provides for dismissal where a party has failed to state a cause of action as a matter of law. This language means that in responding to the motion to dismiss, plaintiff must show that she has made sufficient allegations to support a cause of action against such defendant that is recognized by law. In Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544 (2007), the Court held that to survive a Rule 12(b)(6) motion to dismiss, a plaintiff must allege facts in her complaint that “raise a right to relief above the speculative level.” Id., at 555.

[A] plaintiff's obligation to provide the "grounds" of his "entitle[ment] to relief" requires more than labels and conclusions, and a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do . . . .

Id. (second alteration in original; citation omitted). Further, a complaint will not survive Rule 12(b)(6) review where it contains "naked assertion[s] devoid of further factual enhancement." Id., at 557. Instead, a plaintiff must now plead sufficient facts to state a claim for relief that is "*plausible* on its face." Id., at 570 (emphasis added). The court again visited the Rule 12(b)(6) pleading standard in Ashcroft v. Iqbal, \_\_\_ U.S. \_\_\_, 129 S.Ct. 1937 (May 18, 2009). In Ashcroft, the Court held that Rule 8 "demands more than an unadorned, the defendant-unlawfully-harmed-me accusation." Id., S.Ct., at 1949. The Court explained that, "to survive a motion to dismiss, a complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to 'state a claim to relief that is *plausible* on its face.'" Id. (citing Twombly, *supra*; emphasis added). What is plausible is defined by the Court:

[a] claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads sufficient factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.

Id. This "plausibility standard" requires "more than a sheer possibility that a defendant has acted unlawfully." Id. Thus, a complaint falls short of the plausibility standard where plaintiff "pleads facts that are 'merely consistent with' a defendant's liability . . . ." Id. While the court accepts plausible factual allegations made in the

complaint as true and considers those facts in the light most favorable to plaintiff in ruling on a motion to dismiss, a court "need not accept as true unwarranted inferences, unreasonable conclusions, or arguments." Eastern Shore Mkt.'s Inc. v. J.D. Assoc.'s, LLP, 213 F. 3d 175, 180 (4th Cir. 2000).

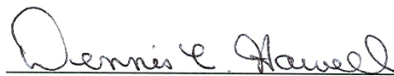
\* \* \*

Finally, plaintiff is advised that she has until April 1, 2010, to file her response, and that such response must be served on all the other parties, and that she must include a certificate of service indicating the manner in which she served such parties.

### **ORDER**

**IT IS, THEREFORE, ORDERED** that plaintiff respond to this defendant's Motion to Dismiss not later than April 1, 2010.

Signed: March 16, 2010

\_\_\_\_\_

Dennis L. Howell  
United States Magistrate Judge

